DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 312 678 CS 506 715

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TITLE Mass Media in the Pacific: A System without a Print Connection.
PUB DATE Aug 89
NOTE 28p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (72nd, Washington, DC, August 10-13, 1989).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Communications; Cultural Context; Developing Nations; Foreign Countries; *Information Sources; Interviews; *Mass Media Role; *Mass Media Use; Media Research; News Media; Programing (Broadcast); *Radio; Rural Urban Differences; Surveys
IDENTIFIERS *Federated States of Micronesia

ABSTRACT

A two-part radio communications survey was conducted to test the effect of the government owned and operated radio station on Pohnpei, a Micronesian island state. The first phase was conducted in the capital city, while the second phase was conducted in rural areas of the state. The purpose of the survey was to determine the extent of radio and other media use in the homes of the respondents, to find out where they got their news, and to determine their attitudes toward different styles of programming. In the city of Kolonia, the 84 interviews were taken at places of commerce. Results indicated 94.2% of those interviewed owned a radio and 60.7% owned a television. Radio was given as a source of news by 71.4%, newspaper and magazine 31.0%, and friends 22.6%. It appears that the best market for broadcasting service is one that broadcasts in both English and Pohnpeian and carries mostly announcements, country music, weather reports, local sports, world news, and religious programming. When examining the results of the survey instrument and interviews with rural inhabitants of Pohnpei, it was seen that 84.3% owned radio and 15.7% owned televisions. The news sources included: radio 52.8%, friends 35.7%, and newspapers and magazines 11.4%. Sixty percent preferred the Pohnpeian language only and 34.3% preferred Pohnpeian and English. It appears that the radio system on which most of the nation depends does a reasonably good job in meeting the challenge of information dissemination. (MG)

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MASS MEDIA IN THE PACIFIC:

A SYSTEM WITHOUT A PRINT CONNECTION

by

John R. Rider, Ph.D.

PART I

Most of my professional experience, in addition to my academic journey, has been in the electronic field as reporter, editor, anchorman, narrator, etc. I had for all of this time assumed the presence of a daily (or weekly) newspaper as a necessary adjunct to the flow of local news, and as a sort of bulletin board for the citizens of its circulation area. Now, however, having served in the Federated States of Micronesia as a Fulbright Professor for a year, I have come to a new appreciation of the function of a regularized print source as a sort of social adhesive for optimum development of a political and cultural entity.

The Federated States of Micronesia, consisting of the island states of Kosrae, Pohnpei, Truk and Yap lie within the Caroline Islands in the central Pacific area. Honolulu is about 3,500 miles to the east of the capitol city, Kolonia, Pohnpei, and Guam is about 800 miles to the Northwest. Approximately 90-thousand people are spread across these many islands and although there is commercial air service to each of the main islands, and Pacific Missionary Aviation service to three of the "outer islands",

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the only other communication is by a field trip ship which, every six weeks or so makes a journey to a few of the outer islands with food, building supplies, fuel, mail, medicine, etc.

There are no local newspapers in any of the island states. The daily paper from Guam is brought to subscribers by plane, There are only occasional stories on the FSM outside of major breaking stories of an international interest. Newsletters from Pacific Missionary Aviation, the JK newsletter, and the National Union (issued by the Office of the President of the FSM), and an occasional mimeographed newsletter from Sokehs municipality on Pohnpei island, are "published" for a closed circulation, but there is nothing beyond them. Weekly newspapers have been attempted, but all have failed because of lack of advertising revenue. U.S. magazines, such as Time, Newsweek, etc. are brought in to subscribers, and the bi-monthly Pacific magazine is available to subscribers. There is no place where magazines are sold to the general public, and the Guam paper is in short supply, but is sold at one of the local grocery stores.

There are four sources of electronic information and entertainment in this country, and in most areas of the central Pacific area. Therefore, electronic sources are very important to any networking of ideas. The sources are: open-circuit television (in one country, Yap), open-circuit radio (government owned in most cases,) audio cassettes and video cassettes.

The TV station on Yap is government owned, and the programs are imported in a package from a USA based company, with no apparent programming policy, vis-a-vis the needs of the country. There is NO local or regional news-gathering system or staff, even though some of the employees have the title of "News Director", etc. There is little equipment available for journalistic purposes. The public information offices of the various states, COULD, in the opinion of this writer become bona-fide news organizations. Television consists of playback monitors and VCR's and is used solely as an entertainment medium to bring images of affluent, highly sophisticated "other" societies to the populace, especially from the United States of America.

The radio stations are government owned and operated. There is some local news gathering and presentation, and the station on Pohnpei, WSZD has begun to increase its local news offerings, but there is almost a total lack of trained broadcast journalists. My work, as a Fulbright Professor was to attempt to create a system for the study of mass media, and to produce a cadre of trained para-professionals

to assist in the upgrading of the product. Time will tell if we were succesful in getting it started, in the face of almost no equipment beyond that which I brought with me, and no studio concept. No typewriters or word processors were available, so hand written scripts were used.

The central purpose of the radio stations is to serve as a "bulletin board" for announcements of many kinds, from funerals to meetings, to hospital announcements regarding the results of tests taken by patients. They are reasonably successful in this task, and most listeners are well aware of their schedules and programs. These stations are truly the informational network of the islands within their own geographic area.

The USIA and other federal agencies of the USA supply taped materials for the stations (which are not used to the extent possible,) and the stations do offer indigenous music as well as canned music from USA, mostly country and western styles. Many of the selections are very out of date, and there is little new supply. There is some rock and roll or R/B, but little "heavy metal" music or music of questionable lyrics. There are programs of indigenous religious music, and often, at seasonal intervals, the stations go out and record music from community groups. There is some use of imported religious programs, but none of the pleading, money-requesting forms are used.

At night, several other radio stations can be heard on the AM band from the Marshall Islands, Guam, and

occasionally from the USA. Short-wave programs can be heard from many countries, including Japan, Australia, and other nations of the Pacific Basin.

The greatest influence, by far, is the extensive use of video cassettes. Every community has at least one, and often many (some are "mom and pop" operations,) video cassette rental stores. The larger stores make a handsome profit and they are the scene for much community activity in late afternoon as rentals are made for the evening. The ownership of and/or access to video systems is very wide-spread, the the viewing of them is the overwhelming leisure time activity. In many places, a community center, like a "nahs" or men's house is the gathering place, not for talk, but for watching video. Usually, as cooking fires darken to ashes, the flickering light of the television screen is seen everywhere, and the sounds and scenes of"cops and robbers," Rambo-type characters, and ninja's dance across the screen to the accompaniament of the sounds of squealing tires, machine guns, grunts and wild music. These are scenes of places these people will never visit, depicting action of which they will never be a part, and illustrating a value system alien to their culture.

The effect is a rapid breakdown of the patterns of family ties, authority and a dimunition of family life and committment and the social mores of the community. When ever this writer raised the video camera to his shoulder it became an icon, especially for the children.

One of the manifestations of the effect of video was to be observed in late beginning of school in the remote island atoll of Kapingamarangi. On a visit to his home island, one person brought a TV set and VCR and showed movies until 3 a.m. The nahs was crowded to the walls with children and adults alike, and the next morning, no one came to school on time because they had stayed up so late viewing television. Many teachers and other community leaders fear the extension of video into the remote areas and into the traditional societies of the Pacific island because of the effects they know will come.

One of the problems, perhaps the over-riding one, is that there is no PLAN, no agreed-to set of standards or principles of control, basically because there is no competition for attention, and because of the vast distances between the island states and the lack of a means of a common distribution of signals.

The Federated States of Micronesia desparately needs to develop control mechanisms for the use and distribution of electronic signals from and within the culture. It appears that the following steps must be examined as a possible outline of activity:

1. Establishment of a weekly newspaper in each state.

2. Development of a policy for the development and use of mass media (print and broadcasting, etc.) for the FSM and its member states.

3. Establish a policy of guaranteed access to all established mass media to all citizens.

4. A committment of the nation and the states to guarantee that the establishment of a mass media system will be an instrument of national development.

PART II

In order to test the effect of the government owned and operated radio station on the island of Pohnpei, a Radio Communications Survey was conducted in two phases, one in the capitol city (9,000 people) of Kolonia, and the second out in the muncipalities in the off islands and in distant communities on the island itself.

The purpose of the survey was to determine the extent of radio and other media use in the homes of the respondents, to find out where they got their news, and to determine their attitudes toward different styles of programming To the knowledge of this writer, this type of public opinion survey has NEVER been conducted in this area. Therefore, the interviewers, students at the Community College of Micronesia were instructed to conduct the interview in either English or Pohnpeian as the respondent wished. One problem in conducting research of this kind is that direct questioning is not a normal activity of this nation, especially when the interviewer is unknown, or where forms (instruments) are used.

The interviews were taken at places of commerce, (stores, restaurants, etc.) and there was no planned randomness because of the lack of organizational patterns in the community. It is felt that the sample was a fair representation of the population living in Kolonia. The municipalities (small townships and or counties,) on Pohnpei island are: Kitti, Kolonia, Madolenihmw, Mwoakilloa (Mokil), Nett, Pingelap, Sokehs, and U. There are three other outer island communities, but they do not get regular service from the radio station on Pohnpei, so no attempt was made to reach or study them.

DEMOGRAPHY OF THE SAMPLE

There were 84 interviews. They were broken down as follows:

Sex	Males	54.8%	
	Females	45.2	
Age	15-19	27.4%	(under representation)
	20-29	40.0	(over representation)
	30-39	14.3	
	40+	17.8	

Municipality			
	Kolonia	47.6%	(Home of the respondent)
	Sokehs	15.5	" " " "
	Kitti	13.1	" " " "
	Nett	9.5	" " " "
	other Pohnpei	7.1	" " " "
	Other Pohnpei islands	6.0	" " " "
	Out of Pohnpei state	1.2	" " " "

Note: This appears to be a fair representation of the general population in and/or in close proximity to the capitol city. It does not represent a distribution of citizens who live in the various areas, but since the city is a mix of persons who live, work and/or regularly visit it, it can be considered reasonably accurate. In no way, does the author indicate that this is a probability sample.

RESULTS

Ownership:	Radio in home	95.2%
	TV in home	60.7 (Cassette play)
Radio Listening:	Ave. listening	3.3 hours per day
	Listen in morning	31.61%
	Listen in daytime	19.0% (during day)
	Listen in evening	74.7
Reading:	Read np or mag	78.6%
	Pacific Times	59.1
	Other (National Union, CTAS News, etc.	16.7
	Time/Newsweek	21.2
	Other magaz.	25.8
Sources of News	Radio	71.4%
	NP & Mag	31.0
	Friends	22.6

Language Preference:

Pohnpein & English both	41.7%
English only	27.4%
Pohnpeian only	20.2
English, Pohnpeian and other languages	8.3
Other languages	2.4

Programming preferences

Respondents were asked to rank program types, with 4 being the strongest preference, and 0 the lowest. The preferences, in descending order are as follows:

Announcements about coming events	2.79
Country Music	2.48
Weather	2.40
Pohnpei sports	2.38
World News	2.38
Religious Programs	2.26
Pohnpei News	2.23
Micronesia News	2.18
Rock and Roll Music	2.17
Micronesia Sports	2.04
Micronesia music	2.01
World Sports	1.96
South Seas Music	.79
Classical Music	1.63
Talk Shows/interviews	1.49
South Seas News	1.37
South Seas Sports	1.16

COMMENTS:

Since it was not possible to draw a random sample, the author does not claim external validity in that the findings can be uniformly projected to the entire population. However, the findings are strongly indicative of phenomena. It appears that the best market for broadcasting service is one that broadcasts in both English and Pohnpein and carries mostly announcements, country music, weather reports, local

sports, world news and religious programming. These findings support present programming of WSZD.

Since 84 interviews were conducted, the standard error of measurement for a proportion of .5 is .054. Thus, the 95% confidence intervals for the obtained proportions ranged from +/- .11 for a proportion of 50% to +/- .06 for a proportion of 10%. The standard error of measurement for the means on the rating scales was 0.13. There were no significance differences among rating scales.

Since 30% of the population of this island state is under 15 years of age, a further analysis was made of the factor of age: This report indicated:

<u>TV Ownership</u>	15-19	78%
	20-29	50
	30-39	50
	40+	67

Note: Although there were no specific questions about ownership, it is assumed that ownership means possession in the home of the respondent..a family ownership. Therefore, the finding indicates that the younger respondents feel more ownership or possession than others.

		Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Radio Listening	15-19	27%	9%	77%
Times	20-29	21	24	82
	30-39	40	20	80
	40+	57	21	50

Program Preferences: Compared to the total sample, all age groups shared preferences for announcements and country music and reduced interest in south seas news, south seas sports, talk shows/interviews, and classical music. The following interests were specific to age:

Ages 15-19 prefer rock and roll music

20+ prefer Pohnpei news and Micronesian news

30+ prefer Micronesia music

15-19 had less interest in world news, world sports, MCicronesian music and south seas music.

40+ had less interest in rock and roll music

40+ was the only group that showed a significant interest in religious programs.

Language Preference	English	Pohnpeian	Eng & Pohnpeian
15-19	57%	5%	38%
20-29	24	17	59
30-39	27	36	36
40+	8	54	46

Note: The preference for English only decreased with age, while the preference for Pohnpeian only increased with age. The preference for bilingual broadcasting was about the same for all age groups.

PART III

THE RURAL SURVEY

In order to study and evaluate the mass communication activity of rural Pohnpei, the office of the Governor assisted in the distribution and collection of the survey forms following the instructions of the author. To our knowledge, this type of survey instrument had never been administered on Pohnpei island before. Please note that the subjects were selected and interviewed by municipality leadership, without the supervision of the author, although written instructions accompanied all packages of instruments.

Sex:	Males	62.8%
	Females	31.4
	Not reported	5.7
Age:	15-19	7.1%
	20-39	27.1
	30-39	28.6
	40+	35.7
	not reported	1.4
Municipality:	Madolenihmw	20.0
	Nett	18.6
	Sokehs	15.7
	Kitti	14.3
	U	11.4
	Mwoakilloa	10.0 (Mokil)
	Pingelap	8.6
	Not reported	1.7

Note: In contrast to the representation of the general population in sex and age found in the Kolonia study, the present rural sample includes more males and fewer young people than does the general population. It is also important to recognize that this culture is male dominated as far as information giving is concerned, and older persons are expected to speak for families. The development of legitimate survey instruments and access patterns to the public in the Pacific islands, as well as in other third or

emerging world countries continues to pose a challenging task to research persons.

RESULTS

Ownership Radio in home 84.3%

TV in home 15.7

Note: Most of the island, outside Kolonia does not have electricty, and power sources come only from portable, gasoline-powered generators.

Listening: The respondents indicated that on the average, they listened to the radio 5.0 hours per day. Since radios are, for the most part, (except where a generator is in use) battery powered, there is a very great consumption of batteries.

In morning:	38.6%
In afternoon:	21.4
In evening	80.0

Reading: 41.4% said they read a newspaper or magazine.

Pacific Daily News	62.1%
National Union	31.0
Sokehs Newsletter	24.1
Other magazines	10.3

Note: The Pacific Daily News (a daily newspaper printed in Guam, and delivered by air to distribution points via the post office and/or the Palm Terrace Hotel desk) is brought out to the communities by the persons who work in Kolonia, and the copies are shared in the small communities to which government workers return each night. The National Union is published monthly by the Public Information Office of the FSM, and the Sokehs Newsletter is a mimeographed 4-page publication that contains local news of the Sokehs municipality community.

News Sources

Radio	52.8%
Friends	35.7
Newspapers or mags	11.4

Language

Preference

Pohnpeian, only	60.0%
Pohnpeian & English	34.3
English only	4.3
Eng, Poh, & other	1.4

Program preferences:

Respondents were asked to rank program types, with 4 being the strongest preference, and 0 the lowest.

Weather reports	2.37
Pohnpei News	2.33
Announcements about coming events:	2.07
Micronesia News	1.99
Pohnpei Sports	1.94
World News	1.91
Religious Programs	1.86
Micronesian Music	1.84
Country music	1.79
Micronesia Sports	1.73
World Sports	1.71
Rock and Roll Music	1.68
South Seas Music	1.62
South Seas Sports	1.48
Classical Music	1.46
Talk shows/interviews//South Seas	1.15

PART IV

COMPARISON OF URBAN/RURAL RESPONSES

		URBAN	RURAL
Sex	Males	54.8%	62.8%
	Females	45.2	31.4
Age	15-19	27.0%	7.1%
	20-29	40.0	27.1
	30-39	14.3	28.6
	40+	17.8	35.7
Ownership:	Radio	95.0%	84.3%
	TV/VCR	60.0	15.7
Listening:	(average)	3.3 hours	5.00 hours
	Morning	31.6%	38.6%
	Daytime	19.0	21.4
	Evening	74.7	80.0

Reading:	Pacific Times	59.1%	62.1%
	Time/Newsweek	21.2	24.1
	other	25.8	nil
News Sources	Radio	71.4%	52.8%
	Friends	22.0	35.7
	Print	31.0	11.4

Lang/Pref		
	Pohn & Engl. 41.7%	34.3%
	English only 27.4	4.3
	Pohnpeian " 20.2	60.0
	All 8.3	1.4

Note: There is a 21.3% higher desire for English only in the urban setting, and a 39.8% higher desire for Pohnpeian only in the rural setting.

PROGRAM PREFERENCE

	Urban		Rural		Overall composite	Overall Rank
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank		
Annc't	2.79	1	2.07	3	4.86	1
C/Mus	2.48	2	1.79	9	4.27	6
Weather	2.40	3	2.37	1	4.77	2
Po/spt	2.38	4	1.94	2	4.32	4
W/News	2.38	4	1.93	6	4.31	5
Rel	2.26	5	1.86	7	4.12	8

P/News	2.23	6	2.33	2	4.56	3
M/News	2.18	7	1.99	4	4.17	7
R&R/Mus	2.17	8	1.68	12	3.85	9 (t)
M/spts	2.04	9	1.73	10	3.77	10
M/Mus	2.01	10	1.84	8	3.85	9 (t)
Wor/spts	1.96	11	1.71	11	3.67	11
SS/Mus	1.79	12	1.62	13	3.41	12
C/mus	1.63	13	1.46	15	3.09	13
Talk	1.49	14	1.15	16	2.64	14 (t)
SS/news	1.37	15	====	17	1.37	15
SS/spts	1.16	16	1.48	14	2.64	14 (t)

Note: Upon examination of the overall rankings of program concepts we see that the intended functions of the radio station, to provide announcements (the bulletin board function), weather reports, Pohnpeian news and World news are indeed the heart of what the people appreciate and use. The entertainment function ranks much lower than the above information-laden programming concepts.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It is important to acknowledge that it was impossible to get what one would call a probability sample within this community at this time in its development. The conflict between the traditional culture and the need to "modernize" is very obvious and this new nation is still and will be for many years be struggling to determine what it will be. However, since the process of social/scientific polling, surveying, etc. are to this point not a part of the cultural and academic environment, it appears that the data are useful as <u>indicators</u> or <u>tendencies</u> for further study.

It is clear that the urban/rural bias exists in the far away cultural grouping of the Pacific islands. Also, it is important to note that the city of Kolonia is served by electric power, whereas the other municipalities are not, hence the great difference in media usage.

There is 80% unemployment in Pohnpei state as far as salaried, cash flow incentives are concerned, and most of

the people who live in and around Kolonia are related in some way to persons who serve in the federal government. Since only one/third of the eligible young people go on to high school from the eighth grade, and since there are very few jobs available without further training, the amount of spare time, or recreational time produces an inordinate cosumption of alcohol, use of pool tables, and also creates an atmosphere where indiscriminate sexual attachments are rampant. The population of Pohnpei has doubled in the last 17 years, and promises to double again within 15 years. At least 30% of the population is below the age of 15 years.

The society, without the benefits of a regularly published newspaper, is fully dependent on the radio for rapid dissemination of information. The radio system does a reasonably good job in meeting this challenge, but as the nation begins to emerge from behind the shadow of the USA it will need a well-defined system of mass communications as a part of its nation-building resource.

One must remember that this is a land where dancing, feasting, and small talk is the social cement of entertainment which holds the traditional society together. The city folk use the video cassette as an extension of these things, whereas the country folk continue to entertain themselves, and are called on to bring cultural singing, dancing, etc. INTO the city for celebrations. There is little doubt that the winds of change will, in the end. sweep over these islands and bring with them vast changes in the patterns of comunication within and outside the culture.

The administrative structure will do well to anticipate such changes and provide a framework in which they may take place with the least amount of disruption.

Special thanks go to Dr. John Scull, who as a colleague at the Community College of Micronesia in Kolonia, collaborated on the design of the instrument, trained the interviewers for the urban study, and conducted the data analysis.

Gratitude is extended also to the Fulbright Commission for providing the support necessary for our presence in the FSM, The Honorable John Haglelgam, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, The Honorable Resio S. Moses, Governor, Pohnpei State, Dr. Catalino Cantero, former President of the Community College of Micronesia, Mr. Ketson Johnson, Special Assistant to the President of the FSM, and a host of colleagues and friends at the Public Information Office of the FSM and the Community College of Micronesia.